



# General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

**86th** plenary meeting

Monday, 20 December 1999, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Hasan (Iraq),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda item 38 (continued)

### Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

**Mr. Larraín (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to thank the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of the delegation of Chile, for his initiative to consider in the Assembly agenda item 38, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I should also like to thank his predecessor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, Mr. Didier Opertti, and Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden for their notable efforts to make progress in the discussion on this item.

Consideration of this item in this forum is meaningful for two reasons. It is symbolic, on the one hand, for the problem of enlarging the Security Council to be discussed in the General Assembly — the most democratic body of the United Nations — and, on the other, for such a discussion to be taking place during one of the last General Assembly meetings of the millennium.

Since negotiations began in the Working Group, we realized that this would be an extraordinarily complex task that would require us to reconcile different — often mutually exclusive — interests. The assessment of this process has revealed the existence of as many proposals as speakers. But that does not discourage us; on the contrary, it is a source of hope, because the United Nations is the best forum for the discussion of ideas; very often such processes are very lengthy but, without a doubt, the desire for change and progress finally prevails.

As my delegation is aware that this is a symbolic occasion, and with the aim of giving the reform process new impetus, I will reaffirm certain concepts that have been the basis of the Chilean position on this topic.

For my country, the reform of the Security Council must be inspired by the need to increase not only the Council's efficiency but also its representativeness and legitimacy, in order to make it a more democratic organ. The expansion of the Council in both categories will ensure that these qualities characterize the work of the Council in maintaining international peace and security for the other Members of the Organization.

Another of the medium-term objectives of the reform is limiting the right of the veto to matters coming under Chapter VII of the Charter. In the long term the veto might be eliminated.

00-21805 (E)



This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

As regards the working methods, we believe that there has been such considerable progress in the discussion of the cluster II issues that there can be said to be general agreement on many points. We believe that agreement on these points could be made official in some appropriate manner. We believe that this can be done right away, by making a recommendation to the General Assembly, without waiting on the results of the discussions on the enlargement of the membership of the Council.

While the concept of the reform as a "package" has been commonly accepted, we believe this concept needs further refinement. We believe that this package concept emerged from the idea of taking advantage of the urgent need to increase the number of members of the Security Council, particularly of the permanent members, in order to obtain concessions and reforms in the area of transparency and working methods — concessions that otherwise might never have been obtained. It seems that the original idea has been distorted over time, and this has resulted in a dangerous attachment to conditionality, which my delegation considers inappropriate from a methodological point of view.

Having said this regarding cluster II, allow me now to discuss certain aspects related to the cluster I issues, which we believe are of the greatest importance.

As we all know, two permanent members of the Security Council reject an enlargement of the Council's membership beyond 20 or 21 members. This imposes limitations even before any discussion with regard to the Council's enlargement. Either we carry out our discussions in the light of this reality and distribute the five or six new posts that these permanent members are prepared to accept, or we continue to discuss hypothetical scenarios that will never be realized as long as those objections remain. Perhaps the time has come to face this reality, which to date neither the other permanent members, nor those wishing to gain a permanent position, nor the Non-Aligned Movement, nor the regional groups — in the final analysis, no one — has been able to change. So we wonder if it is worthwhile under these circumstances to continue to discuss numbers and distribution of seats, ignoring the existence of this fundamental impediment.

Despite the obstacles previously noted and the prevailing uncertainties, my delegation is optimistic. The topic of the reform of the Security Council is no less important than the decisions regarding the founding of the Organization that were adopted in 1945. Initiating a reform that would increase the efficiency, representativeness and

legitimacy of the Council, by democratizing it, is an obligation to the future. This obligation should inspire us to continue this dialogue more flexibly and generously, for the future of our Organization.

**Mr. Mmualefe** (Botswana): I wish to align my delegation with the statements made on this issue by the spokespersons of the African Group and the Southern African Development Community. Since the item before us has been discussed exhaustively in this body, I shall be brief and to the point.

As the delegation of a country from a region that is under-represented, particularly in the permanent-seat category of Security Council membership, we fervently insist that the Council should be expanded in both categories of its membership. Out of a total of 53 countries, Africa is currently allocated only three non-permanent seats.

It was on the basis of this realization that our leaders in the continent decided that Africa should be allocated two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats during the current phase of the reform of the Security Council. I can assure the Assembly that our instructions as African representatives are firm, and we appeal for serious consideration of this genuine and legitimate demand during negotiations in the Open-ended Working Group. In our view, the Security Council should be expanded to no fewer than 26 members.

The reform of the Security Council, of course, goes beyond numbers. We are determined not only to bring about equity in geographical representation, but also to instil a culture of democracy in the manner in which the Council conducts its business. It has always been our contention that the veto is an undemocratic instrument that serves narrow national interests and thus deserves to be done away with.

However, we are acutely aware of the political realities on the ground and that the current permanent members are unwilling to shed this undemocratic power. Thus we have adopted a pragmatic approach: for the time being, the possibility of using the veto ought to be curtailed only to matters dealt with under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The question of the veto not only erects hurdles along the path towards the democratization of the Security Council, but in effect delays progress on the whole question of the reform of the Security Council.

especially because the veto is intrinsically linked to the issue of the expansion of the membership of the Security Council. Notwithstanding our previously stated position on the veto, we are of the view that it should be extended to new permanent members as well. That is to say, the new permanent members in an expanded Security Council should have the same prerogatives and powers as the current ones.

The Security Council also ought to be made more transparent in the conduct of its work. We agree that informal consultations are necessary in the conduct of United Nations diplomacy, but they should not substitute for transparency and accountability. Thus, the Council has to hold more open meetings. In fact, the Security Council should change its tendency to organize debates after it has already concluded consultations among its members. There must be public orientation debates to inform resolutions and other decisions that are to be taken at the end of such debates.

In an orderly and accountable culture, the Security Council should find it worthwhile to hear the views of non-members first, so that such views can effectively be taken into account during consultations among its members. That way, we can ensure that its decisions are truly reflective of the will of the larger United Nations community, thus conferring genuine legitimacy upon them.

**Mr. Schmidt (Austria):** Austria is taking the floor today because it is convinced of the necessity of a reform that will make the United Nations fit for the next century. The legitimacy of the bodies of the United Nations is of primary importance in this context. We therefore regard Security Council reform as one of the priorities the membership of the United Nations has to deal with.

As member States are aware, Austria has been active in participating in the high-level Working Group on Security Council reform and has made its position regarding such reform very clear, most recently on 8 February, 15 April and 29 June this year. I will therefore not repeat it here. My delegation would, however, like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, Foreign Minister Opertti of Uruguay, as well as the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Dahlgren and De Saram, for the excellent work they have done.

The President of the General Assembly rightly pointed out last Thursday that credible progress has been made over the last couple of years, but that there is also an

impasse on certain critical issues. It is precisely this impasse that has led to a lot of understandable frustration and it is precisely this impasse that we have to overcome in the interest of a strong and credible United Nations for the next century. A lot of ideas, many of them good and workable ideas, have been put forward. It is now imperative that we not limit ourselves to repeating entrenched positions, but that we all engage in serious negotiations with a view to really moving Security Council reform forward in the foreseeable future. The mere fact that we have been holding this debate for two days now and that so many members have felt the necessity to express themselves on the issue should in itself testify to the urgency with which Security Council reform is considered by the majority of United Nations Members.

My delegation believes that we can achieve progress on this sensitive issue only if we approach the subject of reform with new ideas and new political will. Unless there is a serious reconsideration of positions in the major capitals of the world, we will not be able to achieve any substantial progress. What we need more than anything else is a new political impetus, as the Secretary-General has only recently reminded us. Austria therefore urges all member States to engage in a new substantive dialogue in the coming year.

**Mr. Matuszewski (Poland):** My delegation considers the question of Security Council reform to be at the forefront of issues which need to be resolved in the wider context of adapting the United Nations so that it may better cope with the challenges that it is facing at the turn of the millennium.

There seems to be a clear consensus that there cannot be any substantial reform of the United Nations without an enhancement of the capabilities of the Security Council to perform its Charter duties, *inter alia*, by making it more representative and efficient. While important progress has been made by the Working Group, it is no secret that this progress falls short of the expectations that have been accompanying the work of that body since its inception. The previous year did not result in a long awaited breakthrough either and, while movement forward was noted in certain areas, divergence on some important issues of the reform persists. This can in no way be attributed to the leadership of the Group. On the contrary, the Chairman of the Working Group, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, Mr. Didier Opertti of Uruguay, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden

and John De Saram of Sri Lanka, did a truly outstanding job.

The position of Poland on the issues relating to what we call Security Council reform has been presented on numerous occasions over the last several years. I would like nevertheless to seize this opportunity to emphasize what we believe to be of particular importance to the future work of the Group.

The size and composition of the Security Council, the principal United Nations organ in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security acting on behalf of all its Member States, should reflect the momentous changes that have taken place on the global geopolitical scene since the last reform, which was instituted more than three decades ago. It is thus essential to enlarge the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We see this as a *conditio sine qua non* of strengthening the Security Council's hand in discharging its Charter obligations.

While being fully aware of the various opinions on the make-up of the enlarged permanent component of the Security Council and the methods of its selection, I would like to reiterate that the international role of both Germany and Japan, including their commitment and multidimensional contribution to the maintenance of the international peace and security, should be recognized by those two countries' being elected as permanent members of the Security Council. Likewise, the representation of the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean should be brought into line with their status in contemporary international relations through a corresponding increase in the number of permanent seats in the Council. We would also like to reconfirm our strong conviction that the parallel enlargement of the category of non-permanent members should include an additional seat for the Eastern European Group of States, whose number has more than doubled during the last decade.

As to the decision-making process, we have noted the various proposals submitted in the course of the deliberations. This is an area where a further exchange of views is clearly needed. What we would like to stress at this particular moment is the importance of ensuring that there is no discrimination between the new and the present members and that the solution which will finally be adopted should also take into account the widely shared opinion that, in order to be an effective guardian of peace, the Security Council must be able to act promptly and decisively whenever circumstances so require.

My delegation believes that, after several years of intensive — and in many respects exhaustive — discussions, the time has come to explore the avenues that would be more conducive to the success of our endeavour. We think that one such avenue is the wider use of informal negotiations, under the auspices of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Group, with the purpose of identifying areas of possible agreement and narrowing the existing differences where possible. We all know how useful this form of proceeding is in other United Nations forums. There is hardly any reason why the Working Group on Security Council reform should continue to shun this mechanism, which, incidentally, could also encourage a larger number of countries to voice their views and concerns.

It is in the context of practicality that I would like to emphasize the importance of the decision taken by the Chairman of the Working Group to produce a questionnaire in order to seek the views of Members on the main issues regarding Security Council reform. Numerous States, Poland among them, have responded to the Chairman's request. We believe that a written summary of the positions expressed in the course of this exercise would help further talks. It is important that we build on the progress already achieved. Repeating the same statements over and over again will not bring us any closer to the goal that we all agreed upon quite a few years ago.

To conclude, I would like to express the hope that the current session of the General Assembly will bring about the long-awaited breakthrough on the remaining issues of Security Council reform. I can assure the President of the Polish delegation's full support for his efforts to lead us towards this target.

**Mr. Erdős (Hungary)** (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the General Assembly's once again taking up the work of the reform of the Security Council before the end of this stage of the current session. We look forward to the continuation, at the beginning of next year, of the activities of the Working Group responsible for this matter. We recall that the vital need for Security Council reform was stressed in numerous statements made in the General Assembly during the general debate. The weaknesses that have become apparent and the failures that have taken place in the activities of the Council were attributed, among other things, to the absence of such a reform. We also welcome the impressive number of speakers that have taken the floor, which clearly indicates the strong interest taken by

Member States of the United Nations in the question of Council reform.

As other colleagues have indicated, the question of the reform of the Council has been a concern for us for many years. Like them, I cannot conceal a certain level of frustration given the scant progress that has been made in the Working Group. However, this reform is no less important today than it was at the time the Working Group began its activities, and it should certainly remain at the centre of the attention of Member States.

In this context, I would like to encourage the President to continue to follow attentively, like his predecessors, the development of the work of the Group and to make full use of the various consultative mechanisms and discussion formats at his disposal.

Hungary has on several occasions already had the opportunity, both on behalf of our country and as a member of the group of 10 countries, to present its position on this matter.

First of all, the composition of the Security Council should reflect the changes that have taken place in the world. We favour an increase in the number of members in both categories. We do not know currently what the specific parameters of such an action would be, but the discussions that we will hold on this matter within the Working Group should guide us towards a rational solution. What we know, however, is that in addition to a certain number of new non-permanent members, the presence of new permanent members of the Security Council representing Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean alongside the industrialized countries could serve to strengthen the democratic nature, credibility and prestige of the body.

Secondly, with regard to the extremely delicate subject of the right of the veto — and bearing in mind certain insurmountable realities — we favour limiting its use. Of course, we are flexible as to the modalities to be selected for this purpose. We believe, for reasons of principle, that the old or new status of permanent members should not make any difference in this respect.

Thirdly, we believe that an agreement on the institutionalization of periodic reviews of decisions taken in the area of Council reform could have a beneficial effect on our future debates in the Working Group on other questions relating to Council reform. Such an agreement could also have a certain effect on the attitude of future

members of the Council with respect to subjects under debate, as well as on their sense of responsibility vis-à-vis other Member States of the United Nations.

We are aware that the exercise in which we are involved is a very lengthy undertaking. We should therefore value even the modest accomplishments and the gradual measures that we have been able to attain. Without losing sight of the basic objective of reshaping the Council and introducing substantial changes within it, we should not underestimate the modifications that have recently been made to the work of the Council, which tend towards greater transparency.

Despite the difficulties that we have encountered and that we still need to overcome, we should not forget that the alternative to the efforts we are making to promote reform of the Security Council would be to freeze the status quo and thereby risk perpetuating a state of affairs that was long ago overtaken by world events. It is in this spirit that my delegation is prepared to cooperate with the President in pursuing the objective that the General Assembly has set for itself in this regard.

**Mr. Ouch** (Cambodia): On the basis of General Assembly resolutions 47/62 and 48/26, we are gathered today to pursue the question of Security Council reform — which has been the object of intense discussions among Members of the United Nations — in order to strengthen the Council's authority and assure its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For six years, progress has been made on various aspects within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. However, with regard to the questions of expansion of the membership of the Security Council and reform of its working methods, a wide divergence of views still exists among the various parties.

It is our responsibility to succeed in our work of reforming the Security Council to ensure that that important organ will be viable and relevant in the coming century. As we all know, this is not an easy task; but I strongly believe that no matter how complicated and difficult reform of the Security Council may be, with goodwill and through mutual understanding in negotiations and consultations, a solution suitable to the interests of all countries will ultimately be found.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express our positions on points related to the issues. They are as follows.

First of all, the Security Council will not be meaningfully reformed unless its composition is expanded and its decision-making process is more transparent and democratic. In this regard, Cambodia is part of the large majority of States that supports an increase in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. This is because, in our view, the legitimacy and quality of the Council's work can be enhanced and reflect the realities of the international community only if a few more responsible Member States are elected to perform the agreed mandate. The addition of both industrialized and developing countries as new permanent and non-permanent members is essential to adapt the Security Council and its mandate to the changing world.

In this regard, my delegation favours the idea to increase the permanent membership by two members from industrialized countries and three members from developing countries. With regard to the non-permanent members, we should strive to achieve the necessary balance between enhancing the opportunities for participation and maintaining the efficiency of the Security Council.

The second issue is the veto power. We understand that new permanent members should have equal rights in the decision-making process. However, we see an urgent need for reforming the use of veto power, as the veto has weakened the Council's ability to undertake appropriate measures in compliance with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that limiting the use of the veto in the decision-making process would enable the Security Council to protect efficiently the interests of the international community and to promote democracy within the Council.

Thirdly, considerable progress has already been made in discussions on how to improve the working methods of, and enhance transparency in, the Security Council. The principles of transparency and openness are of the utmost importance and must be strengthened in the working methods of the Security Council. Interested States are always concerned about what is being discussed in the Council, behind closed doors. It would be useful and efficient if representatives of an interested State could have the opportunity to participate in discussions on issues related to their country, or at least make a statement explaining the situation or be invited to listen to the

discussions and learn of the decisions taken that would affect the destiny of the people of that sovereign State.

**Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has already had the opportunity of expressing its views on Security Council reform, most recently in June of last year in the open-ended Working Group that is dealing with this question. Accordingly, I will be brief.

This topic has been the subject of debate for many years. Why has no progress been made? Though the need to adapt the structures of our Organization to changing realities is so obvious as to require no discussion, the divergent positions of Members on this issue have stymied action.

This has proved very harmful to our Organization. In an intergovernmental body that by definition requires concessions from all sides in order for agreements to be reached, the decision-making process itself is in crisis. At a time when the world is demanding that we adapt multilateral institutions to changing circumstances, we are demonstrating our inability to do so. Worse still, the growing divergence between the Council's composition and methods of work on the one hand and current realities on the other is having the effect of marginalizing the Council — and the United Nations itself — by inhibiting its ability to intervene in the very situations it was created to deal with.

Our position on Security Council reform is based on a number of principles. These are, however, tempered by a degree of flexibility, because we realize that it is legitimate to use different criteria with regard to the Council's composition, and views differ, as is always the case in life, as to the application of those criteria. I will give six examples.

First, the substantial increase in the membership of the Organization since 1963, as well as the principle of universality, suggest the need to expand the membership of the Council. However, we also understand the argument to the contrary, which is that with fewer members, the decision-making process is more efficient.

We believe that a suitable way of reconciling the two positions is to opt for a range of 21 to 27 members instead of the current 15. There is no scientific way of choosing the right number; it will have to be the result of negotiations that will require concessions from all the parties involved.

Secondly, the Charter of the United Nations enshrines the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members. However, it is clear that some actors on the international scene carry more weight than others due to their size, economic capacity, military capability, influence in the area of international relations and other criteria. That is why we accept the possibility of a weighting system in the decision-making process, even though, as a matter of principle, we do not endorse the existence of permanent members or of the right of veto as set out in Article 27 of the Charter. Ultimately, political negotiations will be unavoidable, which once again will require concessions from all parties.

Thirdly, if the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership are preserved — a solution that we believe is far from ideal — the idea of allocating a permanent seat to each region has a certain appeal. However, it has the tremendous drawback of shifting the differences and tensions we experience in our global Organization to the regions themselves. This could poison the atmosphere, which — at least in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean — has of late been characterized by a spirit of extraordinary constructiveness and solidarity. The risk of divisive elements engendered by this debate “contaminating” fruitful cooperation is simply too high. But in the very unlikely event that all the regions accept a formula that includes the expansion of permanent membership on the basis of regional criteria, we would be prepared to agree to its consideration.

Fourthly, many delegations have insisted on the need for greater transparency in the work of the Council. We associate ourselves with these calls, while recognizing that delicate situations may arise that, by their very nature, justify informal and relatively restricted meetings. The answer would be to ensure that this method of operation is not abused and to enhance the dissemination of information to non-members of the Council on the proceedings therein.

Fifthly, as has been pointed out by other speakers, some progress has been possible on a group of measures that, in our internal jargon, are known as cluster 2 issues. It is clear, however, that these cannot be separated from the so-called cluster 1 issues.

Sixthly, an issue that we have not explored sufficiently is the reinforcement of the powers of the General Assembly as they relate to the Security Council, whether by working within the existing provisions of the Charter or, if we wish to be more ambitious, by amending the Charter. The debate that took place in plenary meeting in this Hall a few

weeks ago on the report submitted to us on the work of the Council hinted at the potential of such an approach.

In conclusion, I would like to state that our highest priority is to strengthen multilateralism and the United Nations. We would be willing to make concessions that depart from our ideal as to the composition and the functioning of the Security Council, in the interests of accomplishing this higher objective. We hope that other delegations share our belief in the importance of strengthening the United Nations. Perhaps our consideration of this issue will be sufficient to enable all of us to step back from the positions that we have adopted and re-examine, with a clear mind and renewed interest, how to move forward on the long-delayed reform of the Security Council.

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group established for that purpose, is the right place to do so.

**Mr. Osei (Ghana):** An overwhelming desire has been expressed by Member States during this debate for reform in the work of the Organization. I am therefore happy and privileged to be part of this process. For if the United Nations is to be able to execute its envisioned responsibility diligently and efficiently, it is important that serious and sustained efforts be made to give impetus to the reform process and to maintain its dynamism. The core of the reform touches on the Security Council, whose decisions bind all Members of the Organization.

The Council must be reformed to ensure that it can undertake its responsibilities under the Charter more effectively, with the full confidence of the Member States. This reform must be guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, based on the principles enshrined in the Charter.

In this connection, we wholly subscribe to the Non-Aligned Movement's statement on all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Council, complemented by the African position, as expressed in the Harare Declaration of June 1997. Africa's claim to at least two permanent seats should be adequately addressed, since it is the largest regional group in the Organization.

This apart, we also endorse the Non-Aligned Movement proposal that a periodic review of the structure and functioning of the Security Council is necessary in order to enable it to respond better and more

effectively to the new challenges in international relations, especially with regard to the maintenance of peace and security. I hardly need add that it is only through a restructuring of the Council on these lines that perceptions of selectivity in dealing with issues of international peace and sustainable development can be avoided and the causes of conflict, whenever and wherever they occur, can be dealt with in an effective and impartial manner.

*Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

My delegation is convinced that the proposals of the Non-Aligned Movement, complemented by those of the African Group, contain the seeds of a just and equitable solution which should enable our work to reach an early conclusion, to the satisfaction of all, thus strengthening the Organization. We stand by those proposals.

The new and perhaps challenging responsibilities that the Organization will face in the next century — issues of peace and security, which I have already mentioned, development and poverty alleviation, the dimensions of globalization, humanitarian intervention and its implications in contemporary international law and the concept of good governance — require the active support and cooperation of all Member States, irrespective of size. The Council reforms will ensure such support.

The Working Group lacks not ideas, but the necessary political desire for compromise. Let us all resolve to give the Group the flexibility to achieve that desire.

**Ms. Elliott (Guyana):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Guyana.

On 11 September, during the 4043rd meeting of the Security Council, many listened as several speakers described in heart-stopping detail the brutalities inflicted by lawless militias on countless men, women and children in East Timor. The occasion was unique, in that it not only offered an all-too-rare public glimpse of the workings of the most important instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security — the United Nations Security Council — but, equally importantly, it allowed for

the active participation of more than 30 non-members of the Council, under the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Another striking example of this move towards transparency could be found in the open briefings by the Secretariat before the Council on 10 and 16 December on the situation in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively. While some of these open proceedings of the Council may at times reflect too much on the abstract and academic, and still leave much more to be desired in terms of their need to be institutionalized, CARICOM delegations view this emerging trend towards transparency in the Council's work as a step in the right direction. But it is important to keep in mind that none of this might have occurred were it not for the intensive deliberations over the past six years of the Working Group on Security Council reform.

When the Working Group concluded its work during the fifty-third session, many were left with renewed hope that an important breakthrough would materialize during the current session. This optimism was based in part on the high volume of responses to a series of questions that were presented by the Bureau and contained in a letter circulated by the Chairman of the Working Group. The exercise proved useful in not only advancing our discussion of the matter but also in actively encouraging the participation of delegations that had not previously stated their positions. Consequently, we feel that another round of deliberations during the current session, in a truly open-ended format, would help further the process on all the various proposals on reform.

It should be clear to any observer that the geopolitical alliances and realities that dominated and shaped the years immediately following the birth of this Organization can no longer serve as a useful model for the development of international relations. Indeed, one of the anachronistic features of that era that continues to haunt us is the current format of the Security Council.

In order to address this anachronism, CARICOM has always called for the democratization of the Council. In this regard, we fully subscribe to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that calls for expansion in the non-permanent category. At the same time, we have frequently stated that if general agreement could be found on expansion within the category of permanent members, this would be acceptable to us, provided that there is an adequate balance between the industrialized and developing nations.

In terms of numbers, if expansion takes place within both categories of membership, CARICOM would consider a total membership of 26 — the figure advanced by the Non-Aligned Movement — ideally balanced. Thus, one may conceive of two additional industrialized countries and four or five developing countries as new members within the permanent membership category, with the remaining seats being allocated to non-permanent members. However, as we have said, should such an agreement not be possible, we would be content to have an expansion of non-permanent membership. As for the proposals to allocate seats on a rotational basis, CARICOM has already expressed its willingness to consider this option as a means of resolving the issue of numbers, but would stress that any decision on this matter should be ultimately left to the discretion of individual regions.

In regard to the veto, CARICOM has consistently made it clear that it is anachronistic and anti-democratic and should therefore be abolished. But given the political realities that we must face, we are prepared to consider, for the time being, a restriction of its use to issues falling under Chapter VII. Moreover, in the belief that there should be no discrimination between permanent members — be they old or new — we believe that this privilege should be extended to any new entrants in this category.

It goes without saying that an amendment to the Charter and concurrent change in the membership of the Security Council could prove more acceptable if accompanied by the creation of a review mechanism. CARICOM feels that it would be of great merit to develop this proposal in a manner that would allow this body to comprehensively revisit the composition of the Council — say, every 15 years — in the light of possible changing circumstances and the needs of the international community.

CARICOM has closely observed this process these past six years and strongly feels that noteworthy progress has been made. We are frankly concerned by calls for the Working Group to be “strategically paused” or placed in a mode of “hibernation”, since if this happens, there is the risk that the opportunity to reform the Council may be lost. We strongly feel that this important dialogue must be allowed to evolve naturally. CARICOM delegations will therefore continue to do their all to ensure its eventual success.

**Mr. Chikheidze (Georgia):** Let me express our appreciation for the convening of this meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the

membership of the Security Council, which is an essential part of the reform of the United Nations as an institution.

I would also like to commend Ambassador de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden for the important role they have played in the Working Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the views of the Government of Georgia on this important matter. These are views that we have expressed on various occasions in the past, and our position has not changed substantially.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, the countries of the world and the international system have undergone significant changes. The end of the cold war has changed the power structure and the security needs of the contemporary world. However, the underlying values of the international system — such as respect for human rights and the rule of law — have remained in place. We believe that the mechanisms to implement these values in the current world should be adapted to respond to these changes and to evolving threats to world peace and security. In our view, the United Nations, as a global Organization, should, of necessity, undergo institutional changes.

We believe that the Security Council should be enlarged with the addition of both permanent and non-permanent members. We support the enlargement of the permanent membership of the Council through the addition of two industrialized countries, Germany and Japan, which are major contributors to global peace, security and development. We also support the addition of four non-permanent seats to provide equitable geographic representation in the Council. These would include countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. These changes would increase the Council's legitimacy, authority and capacity.

With regard to the size of the reformed Security Council, our position is that the number of members of the reformed Council should be in the low twenties.

In our view, proper reform of the structure and working methods of the Security Council requires that the expansion of the non-permanent membership of the Council be approached only together with the enlargement of the Council's permanent membership.

We also believe that a review of the use of the veto should be an integral part of the whole package of the reform of the Security Council. In our view, it is an absolute necessity that present and new permanent members of the reformed Council have equal power.

A number of different proposals have been put forward regarding the reform of the Security Council. Among these proposals we find interesting the view that the number of permanent seats on the Council should be expanded to ensure equitable geographic representation for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and the idea that the representation of these regions can be accomplished by rotation within each regional group.

We caution, however, that careful consideration would need to be given to the means of maintaining the effectiveness of the Security Council as a decision-making body if this type of reform were implemented.

As a final point, I would like to mention that we share the view that the issue of the enlargement of the Security Council and reform of its structure and working methods should be subject to review by the General Assembly once every 10 years or in accordance with the request of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Pérez-Otermin** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today's item is being taken up again by the plenary of the General Assembly after having occupied six long years of discussion in the Working Group established under resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993. Six years after its establishment, it should be recalled that numerous meetings have been held at which a large majority of countries have spoken to express their opinions on the desired changes.

In our opinion, this is not the right time to repeat those opinions, since they have been repeatedly stated and are based on precedents. Furthermore, under resolution 53/30 of 23 November 1998, the General Assembly determined the majority required for adopting any resolution or decision on this subject, establishing it at least two thirds of its members.

I believe that, after these long years, during which countless working meetings have been held — many of which were terribly tedious and in which the Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen alike exhausted themselves in vain seeking positive progress — we cannot persist in such attitudes at this session. That is why my delegation believes that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the

Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council must avoid further waste. It will therefore be necessary to act with a clear political will to carry out the reform process. That political will cannot be merely numerical; it must include at a fundamental level those States which today, under the Charter and in fact, have the greatest responsibility in decision-making.

Uruguay reiterates once again its will to achieve agreement, in the context of the norms of form and content that govern our work, on Security Council reform, ensuring that the Council respond to the political, geopolitical, economic and social realities of the new millennium and making it a more effective, more participatory and more transparent body in its management, in implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, which remain fully valid and to which we must adhere more closely in the new millennium than ever before.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate all its support and thanks for the excellent leadership of Mr. Opreti and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of Sri Lanka. We are convinced that we have the best team for reaching our goals.

For our part, we again reiterate that we are prepared to lend our support, without preconditions, to one or various changes that may be agreed upon by the Working Group, and we are also ready to act firmly, yet flexibly, to defend our proposals.

**Mr. Castaneda Cornejo** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 generated great expectations and aspirations among the peoples of the world, not only because it created a mechanism for global collective security in the maintenance of international peace and security, but also because it created an instrument to promote friendly relations among nations; economic, political, social and cultural development; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the principles of equal rights, justice and self-determination.

The purpose of those States that participated in the San Francisco Conference, motivated by the scourge of two world wars, was to create an independent and democratic international body that would respond and act with the greatest possible legitimacy on the basis of the broadest participation in decision-making. However, the

antagonism and mistrust prevailing among the major Powers at that time led to a United Nations whose founding Charter contains provisions that arose from the historical circumstances of that era and currently reveal profound contradictions in relation to the purposes and principles contained therein and to which Member States are committed to respecting and promoting. The granting of privileges to specific States has led to their being used on many occasions to achieve special objectives or to paralyze the Organization, against the interests and desires of most States Members of the Organization.

We recognize that great progress has been made in the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter. However, despite this progress, greater efforts and political will are required if peace, justice, prosperity and democracy are truly to be achieved worldwide. There is a consensus among Member States that the Organization must be reformed and modernized to respond with greater efficiency and efficacy to the challenges faced by nations and to the hopes pinned on it, especially by the developing countries, which consider it to be the appropriate instrument for promoting the political, economic and social progress of all our peoples.

It is precisely in speaking of democracy that we think of the important role that the United Nations has played in promoting and strengthening it internationally. We have, however, witnessed resistance within the Organization that reflects the economic and political realities of current international relations, which are very different to those that prevailed when the world Organization was established.

On various occasions during the celebration of important events — *inter alia*, the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1985, the Security Council Summit of 1992 and the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization — world leaders have recognized and continue to recognize the important function that the Organization has carried out in compliance with its mandate and its contribution to shaping inter-State relations. They have noted that it is the sole universal institution, irreplaceable and essential to the international community, whose purposes and principles remain valid.

Nevertheless, in practice, declarations of intent still fail to become realities in consequence of the major differences and interests of States and groups of States Members of the Organization — especially as concerns the changes that need to be made to the power structure established under the Charter for the members of the

Security Council — which have brought the reform process to a standstill and turned its deliberations into a vicious circle, creating a situation that we think may be very difficult to overcome.

Moreover, we consider that the reform of the Security Council is essential and cannot be put off in the light of the various events that have had an impact on the international community in the course of the last decade. Those events have served to reflect the weaknesses and limitations of the Organization and have, unfortunately, had negative effects that have called into question the Organization's ability, credibility, efficiency, effectiveness as well as its competence for maintaining international peace and security, as a result of the taking of unilateral or group decisions and actions in cases where action should have been taken only with the authorization of the Security Council.

We should therefore not be surprised that it is publicly said that the United Nations — and the Security Council in particular — is facing a crisis, and that it is our responsibility to demonstrate that we are capable of making the necessary changes for the United Nations to gain credibility and trust as a universally accepted instrument for collective security that carries out its work equitably, for the interests and aspirations of all the Members of the Organization, and not merely as an institution that simply endorses or legitimizes events after the fact without knowing whether or not they truly enjoy the support of the majority of its Members.

For six years, El Salvador has followed with great interest the deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We offered some thoughts on the reform process and stated our position on substantive issues during the Group's sixth session, held in July 1999. On that occasion we, like other delegations, said that it was regrettable and frustrating that progress had not been achieved, particularly on substantive issues, and that we found ourselves — as at the outset of the process — in a situation of greater polarization of positions.

We believe that it is timely to underscore that the events that have called into question the credibility of the Organization — and in particular that of the Security Council — should not be repeated, and that we must avoid doing anything that will deepen the crisis of trust in the Organization if we truly wish to preserve the

system of collective security established under the Charter. Otherwise, if unilateralism and regional action replace multilateralism and world action, the system will become increasingly precarious. In order to be effective, such action must be marked by the participation and acceptance of the majority of the member States of the international community.

We believe that international relations have developed significantly in the course of the last 50 years, producing substantive changes in the geopolitical map of the world. Those changes represent new realities to which multilateral bodies must adapt, including the Security Council. If this is not done, as the majority of Members are calling for, it would mean that we wish to perpetuate a situation that the majority of Members of our Organization reject because of its anachronistic and antidemocratic nature.

In this context, we wish to reaffirm that it is only through the reform and democratization of the Security Council that we will be able to eliminate the current imbalances. We therefore join in the just call made by the majority for an increase in the both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council, with new members having the same rights as the existing members in both categories and in sufficient numbers so as to represent all the Member States of the Organization, including developing countries in both categories, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

I should like to emphasize that my delegation attaches great importance to enhancing the working methods, transparency and functioning of the Council — including, certainly, the decision-making process and, in particular, the right of the veto — in order to achieve greater openness, transparency and democratization in the body. With regard to the privilege of the veto, we would once again like to state that we are in favour of its abolition. However, until there is general agreement on this, its use should be limited to actions under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Taking into account the political and financial situation and the crisis in trust and credibility that is hanging over the Organization — in particular with regard to the competence of the Security Council — it is our belief that inflexible and antagonistic positions with regard to the reform of the Council only serve to weaken, discredit and increase the lack of trust in the system of collective security. We believe we must urgently and immediately overcome differences and make mutual concessions that allow us to achieve a general, equitable and just agreement

so that the reform can respond to the legitimate aspirations and interests of each and every member of the international community. If this is not possible, if the differences are truly irreconcilable and individual or group interests are greater than the general interests — a tendency that has been reaffirmed in this debate — it would be a good idea to find new methods and mechanisms so that we could truly and pragmatically make progress in the reform of the Security Council.

**Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia):** My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its appreciation to the President and his predecessor, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for their work aimed at reforming that main organ of the United Nations, which is charged with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Reform of the Security Council is a *sine qua non* condition for the success of the reform of the United Nations system in general. It is also important for making the Council more democratic and reflective of post-cold-war realities, rather than post-Second World War realities. The fact that more than 80 States are participating in this debate, despite the Assembly's consideration of the report of the Security Council earlier in the session, demonstrates the importance that Member States attach to this question.

The delegation of Mongolia has on many occasions expressed its views on this issue. We believe that enhancing the effectiveness and reinforcing the legitimacy of the Security Council are important if the Council is to successfully discharge its Charter obligations and cope with the challenges of the coming century. Any erosion of the authority of the Council — be it by taking decisions outside the Council that are within its competence, by misuse or abuse of the veto power, or otherwise — would only marginalize it.

There is a growing perception among some Members that the Council tends to apply double standards when it comes to some regional problems or specific cases. The debate on the question of humanitarian intervention, held earlier during this session in plenary meeting and elsewhere, is the reflection of such a perception. Mongolia, like other small countries, is vitally interested in the success of the Council's reform.

For six years in a row, the General Assembly and its Working Group have been debating the Council's

reform. Many constructive proposals have been put forward to make the Council more democratic, representative, effective, transparent and accountable. In taking stock of the progress made so far, we could say that some concrete improvements in the working methods and transparency of the Council have been registered. Many previous speakers have already made reference to this; therefore I shall not repeat them.

However, unfortunately, progress has eluded us on the substantive cluster I issues, which directly affect the vital interests of Member States and of the international community as a whole. Such questions include the membership of the Council and the use of the veto power. Lack of progress on these issues is leading to the emergence of the so-called fatigue syndrome, under whose effect one questions the utility of continuing the work of the Open-ended Working Group. My delegation believes that lack of progress on cluster I issues should not discourage us; to the contrary.

We also believe that, marginal though it may seem, some progress has been registered in cluster I issues. Thus, during its last session the General Assembly reconfirmed that any decision on the reform of the Council would require a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Assembly.

This year, the Working Group has reached an understanding that the questions of the increase in the membership of the Security Council and the use of veto should be addressed simultaneously. We express the hope that the next session of the Working Group will duly address the question of the veto as well as the question of the necessity of future periodic reviews of the Council's composition and performance.

Mongolia believes that the veto should ultimately be abolished and that as a first step it should be curbed and restricted to Chapter VII of the Charter. In this respect my delegation would like to reiterate its support for the proposal to require a State that has vetoed a draft resolution to explain to the General Assembly its reasons for doing so. This, I believe, would be a step towards increasing the Council's accountability to the general membership.

With respect to the question of expansion of the membership of the Council, we believe that there is an agreement in principle to expand it so as to reflect the objective changes in international relations since 1945, including the realities of power and the democratization of international relations. Therefore Mongolia believes that

expansion should take place in both categories, non-permanent and permanent. In this respect we reiterate our support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as reflected in the Durban document. We also believe that the expansion should ensure that small States, which constitute the vast majority of the membership, are duly represented and their interests reflected.

In the framework of the efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council, my delegation supports and encourages the holding of periodic open debates on crucial international issues related to different aspects of prevention or to the strengthening of international peace and security. This would allow the Council to take into consideration the views of Member States on these issues. The views of the representatives of small States could be important and practically useful, since most of the items on the Council's agenda deal, in one way or another, with questions related to small States.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize once again that, in its view, what is really needed at this stage is political will on the part of States to make the Council truly representative and more effective and efficient. My delegation is prepared to work with you, Mr. President, and with the Bureau and Member States in reforming this vital body of the United Nations to better serve the membership and the world in the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wish to begin by thanking you, on behalf of the African Group, for the welcome initiative you have taken in convening this meeting, which gives us the opportunity to review this question before next year's meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

This is an important exercise, all the more so since it is aimed at preparing the ground for the Millennium Summit, whose overall theme is, as we all know, "The United Nations in the twenty-first century".

I wish also to join previous speakers in expressing our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Didier Opertti of Uruguay, President of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. I wish to extend this appreciation to his Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of Sri Lanka, for their commendable efforts. We

are certain that we will be able to rely on their valuable contributions when the Working Group resumes its activities.

Mr. President, your outstanding diplomatic skills are invaluable to the work of the Working Group. The African Group will continue to participate actively and constructively in the discussions of the Working Group and will support you fully in the discharge of your mandate.

I wish to share with the Assembly once again the well-known concerns of the African Group about the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. This is a question that is of particular importance to Member States. The impressive number of speakers taking part in this debate attests to this fact.

In the context of the consideration of agenda item 38, we have before us, in document A/53/47, the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Related Matters. The report covers the six substantive meetings that were held during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

The most important things have been said on this issue, and the proposals of Member States submitted to, and discussed in, the Working Group appear to converge. These attest, as they have done since our Group's work began, to the fact that a general agreement seems to be emerging regarding the need to increase the number of both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, and this in order to guarantee equitable geographical representation.

Moreover, the vast majority of Member States support the principle of restricting the use of the veto or even its eventual elimination. The current debate has made this clear.

This convergence of views should not, however, obscure the fact that clear-cut positions remain regarding the size and composition of the expanded Security Council, the allocation of the five new permanent seats and the decision-making process, including the use of the veto.

I would not like to give the impression that the question of the reform of the Security Council can be reduced merely to the issues of expansion and the use of the veto. We also attach great importance to improving the

working methods of the Council and to transparency in its work.

With regard to the question of the expansion of the Security Council, including the decision-making process and the exercise of the right of veto, I should like first of all to recall a fact that we often forget, which relates to Article 24 of the Charter. Under that Article, Member States confer upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and they recognize that in carrying out its duties entailed in that responsibility, the Council acts on their behalf, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. I repeat: the Member States have conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for peacekeeping and security. The word "conferred" is important.

What does that mean? It means that the members of the Security Council are, quite simply, the representatives of the States Members of the United Nations, and as such they should all, individually and collectively, act in a manner that is responsible to and in keeping with their duties, and in the common interest.

Today, we must point out that the decisions of the Security Council are suffering increasingly from a dual crisis — a crisis of legality and of credibility. Indeed, it seems increasingly as though the Security Council, with its current composition, is no longer representative of today's international society. Indeed, the composition of the Security Council reflects only an outdated international reality. The number of States Members of the United Nations has grown considerably since 1945. We made that clear last year, during the 66th plenary meeting, on 23 November 1998.

International geopolitical reality has also qualitatively evolved. International society has undergone profound restructuring, and who today would challenge the fact that new regions and new States had an impact views on the geopolitical and strategic realities of the world? For all those reasons, now more than ever before, the Security Council must, be reformed, not only so that it can reflect the new realities of international society, but also so that it can meet the challenges of the next millennium, with the support of the international community as a whole.

Fully aware of those realities, the heads of State of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the African position, known as the Harare Declaration. That

Declaration was published as an official document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly in document A/52/465. We remain faithful to that position of the heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity, just as we remain faithful to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as expressed at the Durban Summit in 1998. On the basis of both, the African Group reaffirms its commitment to increasing the number of members of the Security Council to a total of 26, including both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Within that configuration, the number of members of the Council would be increased from the current number of 15 to 26, with the number of permanent members increasing from 5 to 10 and the number of non-permanent members from 10 to 16.

Within an expanded Security Council, the African Group, which has the largest number of States Members of the Organization, should be granted five non-permanent seats and at least two of the five new permanent seats, which would rotate according to a system to be decided upon by the Organization of African Unity.

Such a moderate expansion in the membership of the Security Council, based upon the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic representation of all the regions of the world, would by no means alter the efficacy of the Council, as we have had occasion to say in the past from this very rostrum. On the contrary, the Security Council would see the legitimacy of its actions grow, and it would receive the support of all the members of the international community, which would acknowledge one another as members and as participants in the decision-making process.

However, if it is not possible to reach agreement on the increase in the number of permanent members, we agree with other non-aligned countries that an expansion could take place in a way that appears to be easier: at the level of non-permanent members only.

With regard to the question of the right of veto, the African countries believe that it goes hand in hand with the question of Security Council expansion. We firmly believe in the abolition of the anachronistic right of veto, even if at present the permanent members, which enjoy that right, find it difficult to imagine it being altered in any way. That is why the heads of State or Government of the OAU have requested that the new permanent members should enjoy the same prerogatives and powers as the present ones.

Nonetheless, the use of the right of veto should be gradually limited so that it comes to apply only to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter and no longer applies to procedural decisions taken on issues listed in the annex to resolution 267 (III), adopted by the General Assembly on 14 April 1949. Again, we say that the use of the right of veto should be gradually limited until it is done away with.

As regards the working methods of the Security Council and the transparency of its work, we welcome the progress made during the fifty-third session, which is rightly highlighted in the report of the Working Group.

In this regard, it is satisfying to note that, thanks certainly to all the discussions held within the Working Group on this issue, the working methods of the Security Council have been greatly improved these last few years. Today the States that are not members of the Council are better informed about its deliberations than they used to be. Some measures designed to increase the Council's transparency and improve its working methods have already been adopted. This is an appreciable step forward.

The Security Council should consider more fully the opinions of all United Nations Member States that wish to state their positions on the issues under debate in the Council. In this regard, I am thinking in particular that — especially for periodic reviews of sanctions regimes — from the preparatory stage onward, consultations should involve non-permanent Council members, regional groups and concerned regional organizations. We believe that the experiment of interactive dialogue, which was tried 15 December 1999 in the Council Chamber, is worth repeating.

Further, it is also regrettable that Article 44 of the Charter, concerning participation in Council decisions by States that supply contingents to peacekeeping operations, is not rigorously applied.

In addition, we think that the Council should plan to distribute more widely information about its programme of work, its emergency meetings, its public or private formal meetings, and its informal consultations.

Without a doubt, such measures, designed to increase the transparency of the Security Council's work and improve its working methods, fully deserve to be institutionalized, and the Council's rules of procedure,

which are still provisional, could be amended accordingly.

The task that is awaiting the President of the General Assembly and the rest of us is not an easy one. We have complete confidence in the President's capacity to narrow the persistent gap between the different positions on the basic questions. This will require us to show great boldness, to break away from our old habits and resolutely embrace the future.

Let me express the wish that, in the interest of all and of the United Nations, all of us, without exception, will show the willingness to compromise so that a general agreement can be reached. This is what the peoples of the United Nations are expecting of us.

Resolution 53/30, on the reform of the Security Council, is an example of what can be achieved, when there is the political will, when there is a sincere will to understand one another and, in a spirit of compromise, to make concessions.

**Mr. Slade (Samoa):** Like others, my delegation is grateful to the President for this further opportunity to express views on measures for the reform of the Security Council. That so many States have taken part in this debate points clearly to the central place of this issue in the work and the affairs of the Organization. It is a clear indication also, we believe, of the seriousness of the concern of Member States about the results achieved thus far, notwithstanding the time taken by the Open-ended Working Group, and the worrying implications of that situation in terms of the resolve and the commitment to find early and consensus solutions.

Our perspective is that of a small State. The great majority of the United Nations membership is made up of small States. We would readily admit that there is a range of complexities involved. At the same time, we cannot see how we, the world community, can expect to have an effective United Nations functioning in the new millennium era in accordance with Charter principles without a reformed and a modernized Security Council.

Amidst the complexities, a number of anomalies stand out. The composition of the Council does not accurately or fairly reflect the present-day membership of the Organization. Developing countries especially — and some industrialized countries as well — are not properly represented. Many speakers in this debate have remarked on the lack of equality and fairness in the current

arrangements, as, indeed, many have done during the sessions of the Open-ended Working Group.

As well, a number of delegations have pointed to the lack of equitable geographical representation for particular countries and regions. In this respect, the need for a review of regional groupings and fairer representation of sub-groupings has been raised. My own delegation referred to this problem in the General Assembly's general debate in September, and we would here register again our concerns. Furthermore, I have been asked by a group of Pacific Forum States to say that they wish to be associated with our remarks regarding the need for a review of regional groupings.

May I say that we agree with the President of the General Assembly that, at this stage of our work, we should perhaps concentrate on areas more likely to produce agreement. My delegation can pledge itself to this effect because we share the concern to put right the existing inadequacies by consensus and in a timely manner. But we can see that substantive changes would be required, in part because the current structure of the Council does not reflect the facts and the realities of today. For the Security Council to act on behalf of Member States, it seems self-evident that it should be properly representative of the world community — the world community of the present time, not that of a past era. Moreover, a properly representative and democratic Council can only enhance legitimacy and effectiveness.

There seems to be broad agreement that membership of the Security Council, permanent as well as non-permanent, should be enlarged. The question of numbers, we know, remains a particular sticking point. Whatever the eventual solution, we do not believe it can be done piecemeal or as a partial one, for it would not be desirable to seek to resolve the unfairness of representation in one category without attention to the other.

Samoa should acknowledge the several and important changes made to some of the procedures and working methods of the Council in the past six years. We believe they have been of significant benefit to both Council and non-Council members, not least in the transparency of proceedings and the sense of mutuality and confidence likely to be developed as a result.

Undoubtedly, there is room for taking such measures further and we would encourage more changes. Our view is that Security Council reforms should be as

comprehensive as possible and must address all aspects as a whole, including the veto power. The veto is a central issue. It needs to be resolved in the context of current reforms. We think there is a demonstrated case for the veto power to be curtailed and to be restricted to a narrow range of issues. Our own assessment of the debate is that there is wide support for this.

We believe that appreciable time has been allowed for this admittedly difficult and critical process. The issues are now clear and, in our view, have been substantially clear for some time. Our concern is that points of argument are now being repeated or being repackaged. It is the right moment, we think, to consider moving on to a more definitive phase in the current efforts to reform the Security Council.

**Mr. Vohidov** (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): May I join in the expressions of appreciation and gratitude made in this Hall to the former Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Didier Opertti, in his capacity as President of the General Assembly, and to his Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, for their constructive contributions in initiating and guiding the process of discussion on reform.

Today, we are discussing one of the most complex and serious issues on the Organization's agenda. As we see it, if the mechanisms of the United Nations are to be more effective, several of its organs must be restructured in every aspect, the Security Council in particular. There is no doubt that Security Council reform is a necessary factor in the evolution of the entire United Nations system.

The Republic of Uzbekistan considers reform of the Security Council to be a necessary and urgent process. Any delay in this process and the absence of consensus on the distinct aspects of reform would not, we feel, further the essential timely adaptation of the United Nations to the realities of the coming millennium.

We welcome the proposals and recommendations on the basis of which the report of the Working Group was prepared, as contained in document A/53/47. The delegation of Uzbekistan notes with satisfaction the progress made by delegations in the consideration of a number of cluster II issues. Another positive element to be noted is the increase in the number of countries expressing substantive views on the basic issues of cluster I.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has frequently stated its position on an increase in the permanent memberships of the Security Council. In this connection, we support the candidacies of Germany and Japan. We feel that those States have the right to be represented as permanent members of the Council and to assume their full responsibilities before the world community. In our view, such a composition of the Security Council would strengthen its authority and the effectiveness with which it meets its increasing obligations.

The delegation of Uzbekistan feels it necessary for regions to retain the right to determine their own mechanisms and procedures for advancing candidates. The decision on the selection of new permanent members should be made by the General Assembly, in compliance with the provisions of Article 108 of the Charter. We also support an increase in the number of non-permanent memberships, optimally by two to four new seats. Our delegation feels that the total membership of the Security Council should not exceed 21 members.

On the question of granting new members the powers currently mandated to permanent members by the Charter, we call for careful consideration of the entire package of reform measures for the Security Council.

The current practice of selecting non-permanent members should be maintained, in compliance with Article 23 of the Charter. In our view, it is the best way of adhering to the principle of equitable geographic representation for all new non-permanent members.

Uzbekistan believes that the Open-ended Working Group is the most acceptable mechanism for the implementation of efforts to reform the Security Council on the basis of General Assembly resolution 48/26. We feel that the Group should pursue its search for consensus on the entire range of issues, including questions relating to the context and procedure for expanding the Security Council's membership.

The decision-making process will not be fast or easy, but we believe that the ideas for reform must not obstruct the Council's effective role in maintaining peace and security. In this context, Uzbekistan will continue to support the process of Council reform, keeping in mind the changing world situation over the past decade.

We feel that the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene the Millennium Assembly and Summit this year should be fully implemented. In our view, the year

2000 is a unique and symbolic moment for the assertion of the United Nations position and for strengthening its role in resolving the problems of the twenty-first century. Given the rapid changes occurring throughout the world, we must enter the twenty-first century with a new view of peace and security issues. We must be fully ready to meet the new challenges of the coming millennium. The achievement of tangible results in the process of renewing the Organization should be a clear and concrete contribution by its Member States to the work of confronting the realities of the new era.

**Mr. Erwa (Sudan)** (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to extend my thanks to the representatives of Sri Lanka and Sweden for their praiseworthy efforts. We wish them every success.

Six years have passed since the General Assembly decided to establish the high-level Open-ended Working Group to examine all aspects of Security Council reform. Unfortunately, that reform is still a mirage. All of us should prepare our international Organization — and its principal body in particular — to meet the challenges confronting mankind at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

The Working Group has met and concluded its work in the course of the last few years without concrete results. Nothing has been done with regard to the issue of increasing the membership of the Security Council which is one aspect of the desired reform, nor with regard to the composition of the permanent and non-permanent categories. This is in spite of the fact that there are now 188 Member States, thereby making the Security Council less representative and inadequate for reflecting the voices of the majority.

Moreover, the working methods of the Council have for the last 50 years been non-transparent and undemocratic. Decisions that determine the futures of countries are taken without the Member countries involved having their views heard.

Another question to which certain permanent members attach importance is the issue of the right of veto. This right is an antiquated paradox that was dictated by the circumstances of the Second World War. The fact that the major Powers were victors in that war has enabled them to impose their will under the United Nations Charter. Other Member States accepted this bitter reality because the major Powers made the threat that the United Nations

would not be established if the right of veto was not accepted.

This has made the Security Council a paralysed organ in which international peace and security cannot prevail. The incident at the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum is a case in point. That factory, which produced pharmaceuticals for human and veterinary uses, was attacked by the United States of America. As a result of that attack, my country submitted a request to the Security Council for only a fact-finding mission to be sent to my country, and we emphasized that it was to be a fact-finding mission only so as to counter the claims being made by the United States. What did the Security Council do to protect international peace and security? It did nothing. The Council did not take into account Sudan's point of view simply because of the United States hegemony over the Council.

The fact is that we are living under the logic of power and not under the power of logic. Despite our belief that the United Nations is the best — and in fact the only — body to coordinate the efforts of the international community to make development possible and to meet the challenges it confronts in all areas, we believe that there exist shortcomings in the United Nations, particularly in the working methods of the Security Council, that require immediate reform.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to express its full support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represents 80 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. That position favours enlarging the Council to make it more representative and reflective of the universal character of the Organization. To this end, the membership of the Council should increase at least to 26, on the basis of the principles of equitable geographic representation and the equal sovereignty of States. Negotiations in the Council should be democratic and transparent. As far as the right to the veto is concerned, its use must be restricted only to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter until such a time as it is completely eliminated.

My delegation would also like to express its support for the African position reflected in the Declaration of the Harare summit, which called for the addition of two non-permanent seats and two permanent seats for African countries if agreement could be reached on this principle. Those seats would be rotated among African States according to criteria set out by the African States.

Another issue we consider important has to do with the tendency of the Bureau of the Working Group to resort to informal consultations. In this regard, we believe that informal consultations should not be used unless there is a small number of problems that require a convergence of points of view. Other than that, informal consultations should not be used in the Working Group. Moreover, informal consultations give rise to doubts; and it is for this reason that my delegation wishes to continue to examine all aspects of the Security Council's reform transparently in working groups to determine what countries want with regard to questions related to both clusters.

Finally, I wish to say that the negotiation methods used in dealing with Security Council reform should aim at greater democracy, transparency and equity. That is why we believe that the Working Group should remain a high-level group and should be the sole official forum of the General Assembly to examine the question of reforming the Council.

**Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus):** Since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Security Council, in 1993, its yearly reports have, for five consecutive years, been submitted, considered and adopted by the General Assembly. Yet even though there is agreement on the objective of reforming and increasing the Council's membership, a clearly acceptable and ratifiable proposal for enlargement still eludes us.

During past general debates, the delegation of Cyprus has, at the highest level, placed on record its views on this all-important issue. We support expanding the Council through an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution of seats through which the present imbalanced situation between developed and developing countries would be addressed.

The criteria used in allocating permanent-seat status should be a considerable contribution to the budget, to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other goals of the United Nations, as in the case of India, in our own Asian regional group. We feel that the enlargement is necessary in view of the increase in the membership of the United Nations. We also feel that such an increase will render it more participative and, of course, more representative. Its decisions will be more credible and authoritative, as they will represent all of the Member States on whose behalf it is mandated by the United Nations Charter to act.

We are on the threshold of a new millennium. The Security Council, as a guarantor of peace and security; must be prepared to address the vast challenges ahead. Expanding it and improving further its working methods would have beneficial effects, while any attempt to exclude certain countries from any stratum of Council membership would weaken its credibility and support for its actions.

What is needed for the enlargement of the Council is political will and flexibility, so that we can reach an overwhelmingly supported decision. There is already a general realization that reform of the Security Council is inevitable. We hope, therefore, that by expanding the areas of concurrence reached at previous sessions of the Open-ended Working Group, we will take positive steps forward towards a general agreement.

Reform of the Security Council is not only a matter of composition and size but entails also a review of its working methods, so as to provide even more transparency and greater accountability to the general membership of the United Nations. The greater its accountability, the stronger the Security Council. We must welcome here the progress made in the Council's working methods, especially in the area of transparency. For example, we view as positive developments the summing up by the outgoing Presidents, the briefings at the end of meetings by the President of the Council and the providing of background information in its report to the General Assembly. There is no doubt that greater transparency is needed with respect to consultations in the Council's caucus meetings. There is also a need to provide information on the views of the non-members of the Security Council that are participating in its debates on items of concern to them, and to assess the extent to which those views influence, or fail to influence, the decision-making process.

We support the Indian proposal on the incorporation in the annual report of an assessment by the Council of the usefulness and helpfulness of its own actions, and we are willing to discuss and consider the proposal of Germany to report to the General Assembly the reasons for the use of the veto.

While we understand the usefulness and positive effects of informal consultations, we feel that they should be used sparingly, not routinely as they are today. The Council must do more to increase the participation of non-members of the Council in its deliberations. Closed meetings frustrate such participation. In this regard, we

favour the recent practice of holding more frequent consultation meetings of the Security Council that are open to the general membership.

The Council's close cooperation with the General Assembly is of the utmost importance and needs further elaboration.

**Mr. Mochetwa (Zimbabwe):** It has been stated on several occasions that any reform of the United Nations system will be meaningless if the Security Council remains untouched. For Africa, these words are not far from the truth. It had been the hope of this delegation that, by the end of this millennium, substantive progress would have been registered that would have enabled us to enter the next millennium with a reformed Council, reflective of the size of the United Nations and of the aspirations of its members.

While it is true that in 1945 most colonial States — a large number of them in Africa — had their interests looked after by the colonizing States, the situation is no longer the same today. Most of those colonial States are now independent and Members of the United Nations. It is therefore quite apparent that representation in the Security Council should reflect this new dispensation.

My delegation supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that in reforming the Security Council the veto must be curtailed. We are aware that it is not easy to try to reduce a special privilege when the concurrence of those that enjoy the privilege is required. However, we believe that, if those wielding the power of veto in the Security Council are unwilling to have the veto curtailed, the new permanent members in the Security Council must enjoy the same prerogatives as those exercised by the current permanent members.

In that connection, we would like to reiterate what was stated at the 1997 Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit on the question of the Security Council. Africa expects two permanent seats, whose occupancy will be decided by the Africans themselves on a rotational basis, and three non-permanent seats. This, we believe, is a reasonable demand, for in 1945, when the United Nations was formed, five permanent seats were created out of a total membership of about 50. Today, however, there are 53 African States, which were not accommodated when the United Nations was being set up.

We have noted in the debates of the Security Council, including the open interactive debate conducted last week,

that no one in the permanent category fully represents Africa's interests. Some Security Council members themselves admit to this. We have often noticed African issues being taken lightly and have seen African issues being debated at times for public consumption. We feel that Africa will better represent Africa's interests in the Council.

Africa therefore needs a quick reform of the Security Council, to which it will contribute meaningfully, because at least 50 per cent of the Security Council's agenda items pertain to situations in Africa.

A major area of concern to my delegation is the frequent use of informal consultations in the Security Council. While we recognize that informal consultations may be necessary in certain cases, it is our submission that these should be the exception rather than the rule. Open debates should instead become the order of the day, as the operations of the Security Council must be above board. To act otherwise is to act contrary to the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Is it not ironic that some members of the Security Council frequently call upon the developing nations to be democratic in their respective polities, while the same members are themselves doing the opposite in the Security Council? Members of the Security Council must lead by example, by practising what they preach. We have no doubt that Africa will participate at the permanent level with the same seriousness of purpose as the others are doing at present.

My delegation pledges itself to engage in meaningful discussions, and we hope that our colleagues will reciprocate so that we can all live up to the expectations of the international community by quickly reforming the Security Council.

**Mr. Pappalardo (Paraguay) (spoke in Spanish):** I should first like to point out the great importance that my country attaches to this debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. The delegation of Paraguay has participated actively over the years in the Open-ended Working Group, and there and in plenary meetings we have stated our position with regard to the reform of the Security Council.

It is important to emphasize that the Secretary-General's proposed reform of the United Nations will not be complete if the Security Council is not reformed. In

1945, the United Nations was composed of 51 Member States; today, this prestigious Organization has 188 Member States, and the many changes that have taken place in the world require the Organization to adopt itself better to current realities.

In this span of years, walls, structures and philosophies of life have crumbled and States have disintegrated. We have seen the end of the cold war, the end of a particular period of history, and as a result we looked to the future with greater optimism. Such optimism must accompany the work of the Open-ended Working Group and, even though, as one delegate has said, there have been ups and downs in the progress of that work, the delegation of Paraguay will devote special attention to this issue. We assure the President of the General Assembly, as well as the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, that we will cooperate effectively so that we can make progress in the immediate future on this important issue of Security Council reform.

This year, the international community has witnessed requests for concrete action by the Security Council. This is a reflection of the fact that when there is a crisis, the world looks to the Security Council because it is the body responsible for maintaining international peace and security. The military attack by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was conducted contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

The central reform issue is the question of the expansion of or, more precisely, equitable representation on and increase in the membership of, the Security Council. Equitable representation will be achieved only by an increase in the number of both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. As I said at the beginning of my statement, the number of Members of this Organization has increased more than threefold since 1945, in particular as a result of the admission to the Organization of many developing countries.

More than 30 years have passed since the number of members of the Council was increased from 11 to the present 15. The developing countries are severely under-represented in the Council. The question of an increase in the number of both categories is of real importance. We believe that the new permanent membership should include at least two industrialized countries that have established themselves as major contributors to this Organization and that have participated in the building of the present-day world.

The delegation of Paraguay appeals strongly for a seat for the Latin American and Caribbean region among the new permanent members, as well as for the other regions of the developing world, such as Africa and Asia. If we wish to guarantee the representativeness and the legitimacy of the Council, such countries must be included in the increase; the expanded Council would thus be strengthened and achieve equitable representation.

The delegation of Paraguay believes that the formula put forward by Ambassador Razali with regard to the enlargement of the Security Council was a good one; it would lead to an equitable geographical increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members and allow for greater participation by the various regions of the world. However, since that formula was put forward, not only has time passed, but new formulas for adding new members have been introduced, incorporating other elements that are very important and require serious and in-depth analysis by the Member States of this Organization.

The adoption by consensus of resolution 53/30 on 23 November 1998 was a substantive step towards reaching general agreements on the reform of the Council. It provides further proof that, with realism, flexibility and political will we can make progress. The debates that take place next year will have to be aimed at bringing positions closer together and at avoiding confrontation as much as possible.

In conclusion, with regard to the question of the veto, Paraguay believes that, given the current historical circumstances, which are very different from those that prevailed when the Security Council was established, the right of veto, which is a true privilege for a few, should be confined exclusively to the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. However, we must seek a formula that will limit the range of its utilization until it can be eliminated completely.

**Mr. Vural (Turkey):** The sheer number of speakers addressing the issue of Security Council reform — perhaps more than have ever spoken in any other debate — testifies clearly to the importance that the membership attaches to this vital question. We are all united, I hope, in the belief that the Council must represent the world of today and tomorrow, not the world of 1945.

Twenty years after this issue was raised, and six years after the Working Group was established, we are still in search of answers to this challenge. When drawing

up a balance sheet on the reform process we cannot omit the fact that tangible progress has been achieved on the cluster II issues. The working practices and transparency of the Council have improved somewhat. Although modest in nature, these steps were not given but were achieved through the persistent work of reform-minded Members, both within and outside the Council. These improvements are the kind of progress that the general membership would like to see.

On the core issue of expansion of and equitable representation on the Council, however, let us be frank and recognize that fundamental differences still persist. At this stage of the debate perhaps it would be appropriate to ask ourselves why we have failed to come to any agreement. Are we addressing the right issues or asking the right questions? Are we seeking to satisfy incompatible demands and conflicting needs through a single reform package? Perhaps we should pause and reflect upon what we intend to do and how to accomplish it.

I think that we all agree that the need for the expansion and reform of the Council is real. The discrepancy between the priorities of a limited club and the ever-increasing and changing demands of the much wider international community — of the developing world especially — is becoming more evident and acute. Every new international issue or crisis reminds us of the weakness of the institution and its practices. The Security Council cannot remain immune to the global push towards achieving more representative, democratic, transparent and accountable structures.

A patchwork solution, a partial remedy, cannot be a cure. Adding a few members, some of them on the strength of their financial contributions and some on the basis of regional recognition, cannot render the Council more democratic and representative. It cannot enhance the sense of responsibility that wider participation would provide.

There can be no structure without a coherent architecture. The concept of permanent membership, without due regard for the privileges that go with it, is an illusion. However, the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council with the current privileges can only serve to perpetuate the unfair and unjust configuration.

Turkey remains open-minded regarding the reform process. We cannot remain indifferent to the marginalization of the Security Council. However, a

reform of the Council for the sake of reform is not a sound approach. We have to redefine our task. This entails broader and more equitable representation based on regional, subregional, economic and other relevant criteria, on the one hand, and the absence of a caste system within the Council, on the other hand.

As we continue this debate through the Working Group we might also reflect on the possibility of instituting a small group of wise men that could assist the Working Group in an advisory capacity, so as to inject some fresh ideas into our sterile debate. This group could be composed of eminent personalities drawn from various regions and subregions and diverse cultures. They could approach this daunting task from the perspective of the broader interests of the international community.

In conclusion, may I express our profound condolences to the Government and the people of Venezuela in the wake of the floods and landslides that have taken a heavy human toll and resulted in major material losses. We must all be united in assisting Venezuela in its recovery from this tragedy.

**Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius):** I join previous speakers in thanking the President for holding this important debate concerning the question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We hope that our discussion here will provide new momentum for progress in the Open-ended Working Group, where the subject has now been under consideration for six long years.

The Security Council is the supreme body entrusted by the international community with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and, under the Charter of the United Nations, with the power to make decisions that bind the entire United Nations membership. Under the existing structure, any one of the five permanent members, exercising its right of veto, can block the Council from acting, even in situations where action is urgently called for. This may not actually happen too often, but the fact is that the right of veto gives any of the Security Council's permanent members undue weight in the decision-making process. One can go as far as saying that under the present system one single permanent member has the right and the power to hold the Security Council — and, indeed, the whole United Nations membership — hostage, if it simply chooses to do so, for whatever reason. It also means protracted negotiations and undue delays in decision-making in the Council, until compromises — often bad ones — are

made with an unwilling member. This also underscores why Security Council decisions are so often lacking in consistency.

Under the present system of the Security Council, the elected members of the Council play only a secondary role in the decision-making process. More often than not, they simply have to wait on the sidelines while the permanent members work out compromises based on their national priorities and other considerations. This is demeaning, not only to the non-permanent members but also to the rest of us, who elect them to serve on the Security Council. We brand such a decision-making system as undemocratic and arbitrary when it is used at the national level, and we need to strongly discourage it in this world body, and especially in the Security Council, to which we have given the supreme power to act on our behalf for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The system is archaic, representing a legacy of a bygone colonial era when political as well as economic power rested with a couple of colonial Powers, while the rest of the world generally languished under colonial rule or existed as nations defeated in the Second World War. The structure and the method of operation of the Security Council reflect the realities of those days and are completely out of tune with the realities of our times.

We do not need another Seattle scenario, where civil societies mobilized to remind us that the system under which we work is unfair and must change. The necessary change must come from within. We therefore call upon the permanent members of the Security Council to sit together not only to discuss seriously with us changes to be made, but to brainstorm among themselves and propose the changes that are appropriate so that the Security Council can become a really democratic and credible organ deserving of the total confidence of all mankind in the fulfilment of its important responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The position of Mauritius on the representativeness and expansion of the Security Council is the known position of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity. Africa has been denied its rightful representation in the Security Council for far too long, both in the permanent and non-permanent categories. In our view, India — as the second most populous country, with more than a billion people, as the largest democracy in the world and as an industrial and economic powerhouse — more than deserves its own seat in the Security Council in the permanent category.

It is also our firm belief that expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories should happen as one package, and not piecemeal. Expansion in both categories must take into account proper and equitable geographic representation.

We appreciate the fact that from time to time the presidency of the Security Council holds open discussions on important issues. We believe that the right moment to hold such open discussions is before resolutions are adopted by the Council on important issues, rather than afterwards. Such a practice would enable the Security Council to take informed decisions after it has heard as many non-members of the Council as possible express their views. Furthermore, the Council should reach out to regional and subregional organizations and seek their opinions as well on issues of concern to them. This means that the Security Council should desist from acting as the kitchen cabinet of a select few in formulating decisions that have important bearing on the people concerned, and on all of us.

Transparency enhances credibility; and in a world body, at the United Nations, that should be the benchmark at all levels, and especially in the Security Council.

**Mr. Leao Monteiro** (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): The President of the General Assembly has made possible this current round of general comments from Member States before we resume our discussions on the question of Security Council reform next year. This allows us to take stock of our willingness to deal with the problem, and we hope that it will provide him with useful information for guiding us in our work.

I would first like to note that we do not believe that our Working Group has wasted time in repeating itself in recent years. In our view, given that such an important and complex issue cannot be resolved quickly, it only appears that we are running in place, as some have said. In fact, we have made changes and refinements and have fleshed out our positions, thereby making it possible today for us to begin to discern the possibilities among which we will have to have the courage to choose.

At the same time, resolution 53/30 has forced us to take up the question in all its aspects and to seek a comprehensive solution. It does not seem possible for us to bring together the components of such a solution without all of us moving beyond the narrow pursuit of

our national ambitions, because, quite simply, those ambitions cannot be compatible. Certain parties' fear of seeing their control over decisions diminished throughout the world, and others' fear of losing the chance to gain that privileged control, is a major obstacle to overcome.

Furthermore, the persistent desire to deny a more open administration of international life is fed by the potential insecurity that the growth of certain contemporary threats presents. The concern over those threats is justified. A major question is therefore whether those threats will continue to be confronted essentially by those holding exceptional power or by the will and joint action of all those concerned. We are convinced that the latter path has every advantage. It would certainly be more legitimate and more respectful of the status of all the Members of the United Nations, and would also be more powerful and effective. Of course, this is not a question of reducing the strength, capacity or resources of those who possess them, but rather of adding to them the strengths, capacities and resources of others to create a truly international framework.

We have for a long time lived in an environment that tends to dismiss as naive any solutions that are not guaranteed by the power of those who promote them. Most States thus find themselves excluded from participation because they do not have a share of responsibility. We should therefore not evaluate the viability and efficiency of a more open and participatory system of collective security on the basis of the current routine behaviour of those that cannot have their say, because a change in those responsibilities is precisely what they need in order to enhance their efforts and knowledge to a level commensurate with their degree of participation in international action.

The large and the small, the powerful and the less powerful, will not cease to be what they are when they put their necessarily different efforts into a collective and pluralistic framework. On the other hand, the largest and most powerful stand to gain genuine respect and general appreciation. This openness and sharing have to do not only with the expansion of the membership of the Council, but also with powers, duties, decision-making processes and working methods in the Council. There is no reason for contradiction in any of these areas between the objectives of efficiency, transparency and democratization. This is simply a challenge to be honourably met and overcome with confidence. If we allow ourselves to be guided by this spirit, the road leading to the components of a global solution will become more apparent and

everyone — especially, in some cases, those most directly involved — will be able to work more methodically towards that solution.

Mr. President, at this stage and in this preliminary segment, this is what my delegation thought was most relevant. It will participate in the discussions that you will organize in the near future on the different aspects of the topic we are dealing with. We are certain that you will do so in the open and transparent manner to which we have become accustomed in the General Assembly.

With regard to relaunching the work, like other speakers we would like to refer to the suggestion that you develop the use of the questionnaire produced by your predecessor. We believe that it would be interesting and useful for the various positions on different aspects of this issue to be presented in a structured way and made known to all. The value and the scope of this instrument will, however, depend on the content of the questionnaire. That content has been constructively criticized, and it is necessary, we think, to make the questionnaire more complete so that it can offer the necessary range of answers and clarifications. This would probably result in a greater volume of responses than the one that has been used to date.

**Mr. Lancry (Israel):** Today we speak of a goal that everyone can understand: a more equitable and representative Security Council. I wish to emphasize that the State of Israel fully supports this aim. We too share the vision of a Security Council that is more equitable and transparent in its work and accountability and more representative of Member States.

However, any talk of this purpose is incomplete when it omits the most glaring case of inequity and lack of representation that tarnishes this Organization today. I refer to the fact that my country is still denied membership in a regional group. This obstacle prevents Israel alone from being able to be elected to the main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. We alone, therefore, are denied the right to be an equal Member in the work of the United Nations.

Article 2 of the Charter stipulates that:

"The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members."

The fact that Israel cannot join any regional group stands in direct contradiction to this principle.

In a recent judicial opinion put out by Justice Sir Robert Jennings, who served as Judge and President of the International Court of Justice from 1991 to 1994, it is noted that the exclusion of Israel is a form of discrimination placing the Member States and the United Nations in violation of their legal obligations and of the Charter. Justice Jennings writes:

"Such discrimination prevents Israel from enjoying the full benefits of its membership and places the United Nations in breach of the Charter".

In particular, Justice Jennings states:

"Israel's exclusion from the regional group system places the United Nations in breach of its fundamental obligations regarding sovereign equality and is thus illegal".

Moreover, the Member States themselves are likewise bound by these fundamental obligations. As Justice Jennings states,

"It is evident too that Members are under an obligation to remedy the present situation".

Today it simply cannot be said that the United Nations Charter is being fully upheld in practice. This undermines the integrity of the Charter and therefore of the Organization itself. For us, unfortunately, the sting of exclusion goes beyond the fact that it is illegal. My country arose out of the scattered remnants of 2,000 years of exile in which the Jewish people suffered as a displaced nation, without a voice or a home in the world community.

Our dream, the dream that gave birth to the State of Israel, was to finally rejoin the family of nations. We too would merge with the chorus of the international community as an equal voice. That basic right, a right enjoyed by every Member of this Organization, large or small, was promised in the admission of Israel in 1949 as a Member of the United Nations. Fifty years later, we have yet to enjoy it.

We have been waiting to realize our potential in the workings of the United Nations. We yearn for an opportunity to participate fully and equally in the initiatives launched here. It is not merely our right as a Member State. It is a manifestation of our deepest aspirations as a people and as a country.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently called attention to the anomaly of Israel's exclusion. He stated:

"The exclusion of Israel from the system of regional groupings; — these and other circumstances have given a regrettable impression of bias and one-sidedness." (SG/SM/7260)

The Secretary-General went on to say:

"I had very much hoped that Member States would have reached agreement on this by now. As I have said before, we must uphold the principle of equality among Member States. I shall keep encouraging all concerned to find a solution." (*ibid.*)

No reform of the Security Council can be complete without facing this injustice. I ask that this anomaly in the United Nations system finally be addressed and rectified. As long as one Member State is denied the equal participation granted to all others, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter remain unfulfilled.

**Mr. Donigi** (Papua New Guinea): I am honoured to be one of the last speakers, because I can say authoritatively that past and present discussions concentrated on the reform of the Security Council point to one common agreement: there is unanimity on the need for reform. After more than 50 years, it can be expected that the Council has matured and is very experienced in all facets of peace and security. But being experienced is one thing; applying the experience to practical situations is another matter entirely.

Just last week, it was said in the media that President Jacques Chirac of France foresees a world which will be transformed from unipolar to multipolar. This will be like an electron with negative and positive influences. The greater membership of the United Nations will be very much subject to the new international geo-politics. If this is true — and I dare say that, observing from the periphery of the Pacific, what President Chirac is describing appears to be unfolding before our very eyes — then it seems imperative that we not limit ourselves to reforming the Security Council, but must seize the opportunity to review the questions of governance and law codified in the Charter of the United Nations. The timing is right and the review should not be delayed, or we will lose all momentum.

Arrangements that took into account the bipolar politics that existed in the 1950s were reflected in the Charter. If indeed the future of the world is to be multipolar power, then the whole regional grouping system within the United Nations must of necessity be reviewed as well. In this respect, when the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea addressed the Assembly in September, he stated that there is a need to reconfigure the geographical landscape of the United Nations. In such a reconfiguration, we would anticipate that each subregion must be represented on the Security Council. Alternatively, some discussion must be focused on creating opportunities for subregions to be represented. This will necessarily entail some discussion of the composition of the subregions.

On the issue of expansion, we agree that there must be an expansion in both categories. There must, however, be no second-class permanent members. The veto power must therefore be limited to certain areas of global concern. We also believe that permanent status and the right of veto must be tied to commensurate obligations, in particular contributions to international peace and security.

My delegation is prepared to be engaged in constructive discussions on each Chapter of the Charter. We are concerned, however, that general discussions on matters of principle may not result in any progress. We believe that once a document is produced, the delegations will be able to sit down and talk about the implications and to try and find a way forward. Beyond general principles, we would like to see proposals for substitute provisions of the Charter as a starting point.

**Mr. Mangoela** (Lesotho): We welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate on agenda item 38, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". This is a question to which the General Assembly should accord the highest priority, touching as it does on the essence of the power relations among Members of the United Nations and on how each country's political interests should be afforded maximum protection.

At the outset, permit me to align myself with the statements made by Cameroon, on behalf of the African Group, and Namibia, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

Last Wednesday, the Security Council once again dealt with Africa in an open meeting. It was one of several such meetings in the recent past. Some of those, such as that of 29 September, were held at the ministerial level. It

should not come as a surprise that this is the case, because it is well known that Africa is the main preoccupation of the Security Council due to the numerous conflicts there.

African representation in the Security Council needs to be enhanced in order to reflect the continent's interests and perceptions. Africa's position on the issue of Security Council expansion is already well known. It has been articulated by Organization of African Unity summits — first at Tunis in 1994 and subsequently at Harare, in 1997, and at Ouagadougou, in 1998. That position is that Africa should be accorded two permanent, rotating seats.

The positions of many other countries are also well known. They have been adequately articulated in the last six years of our dealing with this subject. A fresh momentum is now required to move this matter forward. Continued and unending discussions will only bring discredit to the United Nations as a talking shop. It is necessary to delineate the main points that have emerged from the last six years of discussion.

First, there is some satisfaction with the reforms that have been effected by the Security Council itself under cluster 2, such as the periodic orientation debates, periodic field operations reports, et cetera.

Secondly, everybody agrees with the need to increase the number of members of the Security Council to reflect the increase in the membership of the United Nations, since the last expansion of the Council took place in 1965.

Thirdly, a large majority is in favour of the expansion of the Security Council in both categories.

Fourthly, a large majority desires an increase in the number of seats to a number not less than 24.

Fifthly, every country in the large majority that is in favour of expansion in both categories agrees that Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean deserve new permanent seats, including at least an additional one for Asia. There is also considerable support for honestly and seriously considering the claims of Germany and Japan to permanent seats.

Sixthly, except for the permanent five, there is unanimous agreement that, in its present form, the veto is anachronistic and therefore in need of either abolition or, at least, reform.

Clearly, our remaining tasks should be to narrow the differences and to begin to work towards a negotiated compromise. In this connection, it would be useful to continue to find ways of making progress in reforming the working methods of the Security Council, and then to take on the difficult task of narrowing the differences with regard to expansion. Here it is worth recalling that large majorities already exist in support of certain positions, but that the minorities are significant, either in their numbers or in their influence on the work of the Organization. The starting point ought to be to come to closure on the question of whether the expansion should take place only in one category or in both. There is no point in talking any more about expansion unless this basic question is resolved.

Next comes the question of what to do about the veto — assuming, of course, that the resolution of the earlier question is in the direction of the creation of new permanent seats, as the large majority would wish.

We can then deal with the other remaining questions related to expansion, such as the optimal size of the Council, the number of additional seats to be allocated to each region, et cetera.

This is the only way forward, and we strongly recommend it to the attention of the President of the General Assembly; otherwise the General Assembly will continue to go around in circles for one more year. I am sure the President does not want that to be the legacy of his presidency.

The delegation of Lesotho pledges to the President its full support in his search for a credible solution to this vexed question. During the forthcoming debates, we plan to make substantive contributions to that debate.

**The Acting President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 38.

*The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.*